

Finding the Parents of Luther W. Dunham (1804-ca. 1850) - Revisited (Draft)

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In the paper “Finding the Parents of Luther W. Dunham (1804-ca. 1850),” I proved that the parents of Luther W. DUNHAM were Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. (1761-1831) and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK (1764-1845) from Brimfield, MA. I now briefly summarize the research basis for this proof. After extensive searching, I found a FamilyTreeDNA kit with DUNHAM family ancestry that was not a Luther W. DUNHAM descendant. For a set of four, known Luther descendants with FamilyTreeDNA kits I located on chromosome 12 a 9.5 cM segment of DNA that was common to all five kits. This is often called triangulation and implied that we all shared a common ancestor. I researched the genealogy of this kit back to Deacon John¹ DUNHAM and thus established a candidate parental descent line as John¹ Joseph² Micajah^{3,4} Joseph⁵ Micajah⁶ DUNHAM with Luther’s paternal family line branching somewhere off this line. To determine the location of this branch required examining maternal lines.

I identified a group of seven known descendants of Luther W DUNHAM, each with an AncestryDNA kit (kit) and called them the Group. The idea was to find an AncestryDNA shared match (match) with a member of the group where the Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) between the group member and the match, as determined by the family tree linked to the kit, corresponded to a person found in a particular family line. For the LAZELL family I found 34 kits with 43 matches and for the DAVIS family I found 12 kits with 19 matches. As discussed in the paper, there were multiple DUNHAM, DAVIS and LAZELL inter-marriages and so it would be difficult and problematic to claim a DNA based relationship to a particular Micajah³, Micajah⁴ or Joseph⁵ DUNHAM family. However taken together, the LAZELL and DAVIS data provide good evidence that Luther was connected to the candidate parental descent line and that Joseph⁵ DUNHAM Sr. and Sarah⁴ DAVIS were likely Luther’s grandparents. I begin searching for matches with the spouses of the sons of Joseph⁵ DUNHAM Sr. and Sarah⁴ DAVIS. When I looked at Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK as being Luther’s mother using AncestryDNA’s ThruLines™, HITCHCOCK matches popped up for all but one member of the Group – Luther’s parents had been found.

The final step was to develop a proof that Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK were the parents of Luther. I based this proof upon the new idea of using a couple/parents pedigree chart that is similar to the standard pedigree chart except that couple/parents populate the chart instead of individual people. The reason for this is that AncestryDNA does not provide information if an AncestryDNA shared match came from the father or mother. Hence, we look at the father and mother as a single unit in this pedigree chart. The root couple/parents were the assumed parents of Luther – Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK. I developed the usual pedigree for Joseph and Rebecca going back three generations for each using standard genealogy techniques and approaches. Then I derived Joseph and Rebecca’s couple/parents pedigree chart (pedigree chart) as shown in Fig. 1 from their usual pedigree charts.

I now began a systematic search to find matches with a member of the group where the MRCA between the group member and the match, as determined by the family tree linked to the match, corresponded to a person found in the pedigree chart. I used both ThruLines™ and focused searches to find such matches. When I discovered one, I recorded the information into a database. I then recorded the total number of such kits and matches found for couple/parents at each level and position of the pedigree chart. In the paper, there were 350 kits with 511 matches. Clearly, this is far too many kits and matches to arise from random events and thus it was established that Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. (1761-1831) and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK were the ancestors of Luther W DUNHAM. Based upon the ages, the only possible conclusion was that Luther was a child of theirs. In summary, the couple/parents pedigree chart acted like a Rosetta Stone, taking hundreds of disjoint and independent pieces of DNA derived information and organizing the pieces so they made genealogical sense.

When Ancestry announced that they were raising the minimum amount of DNA in a match from 6 cM to 8 cM, I realized that a significant amount of the data used in this research was going to be lost unless I acted quickly to preserve access to kits below 8 cM. Based upon more experience in finding kits with the MRCA corresponding to a couple/parents in a pedigree chart, I also realized that one should search for kits based upon ancestral surnames closest to the root couple. Finally, I realized that I had not documented the process of finding the MRCA and was not consistent in the methodology used to determine the accuracy of the family tree associated with the kit for the MRCA.

In August of 2020, I decided to go back and redo the data collection for the research to address the issues identified above. The first step was to create two groups in AncestryDNA: one for matches found using ThruLines™ and the other for matches found using focused searches. Then I marked all the matches used in the research as belonging to the appropriate group for each member of the group of Luther W DUNHAM descendants used in the research. This preserved access to all matches used in the research for the future, including those with less than 8 cM of common DNA.

I decided to make it easy for other Luther descendants with an AncestryDNA kit to confirm for themselves that Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK were Luther's parents. The essence of the research is to find kits with the MRCA being a person found in the couple/parents pedigree chart. There are two approaches to find such kits. First, AncestryDNA's ThruLines™ is a great tool for finding close family relationships. ThruLines™ use the family tree linked to your AncestryDNA kit to find people who are in your tree and are in your matches' linked trees. It seeks out possible common ancestors and then proposes the structure for this relationship between you and the kit's owner. All you need to do is identify ThruLines™ matches for those ancestors who appear in the pedigree chart and then examine the suggested common ancestors. One only needs to confirm that the proposed relationship is correct and can use standard genealogy techniques and approaches to accomplish this.

The second approach is to use a focused search for a specific surname and location on the main DNA matches webpage. One enters a surname in the "Surname in matches' trees" box and a location in the "Birth location in matches' trees" box, performs a "Search" and then examine the family tree associated with each kit to determine if there is a MRCA found in the couple/parent pedigree chart. To make it simple, I streamlined the number of focused searches to the one

shown in the Table 1. Essentially, I focused on the four closest paternal and four closest maternal surnames. I note that this removed six surnames used in the original research and translated into the removal of a substantial number of kits. However, reducing the number of searches and removing those kits found by the discarded searches resulted in finding substantially more kits than in the original research.

I added a second cousin once removed who was a Luther descendant to the Group, bringing the total number of members to eight. I began from scratch finding kits with the MRCA corresponding to couple/parents in a pedigree chart using ThruLines™ and the focused searches in Table 1. I completed the data collection on November 9, 2020, and entered the number of kits and matches into the couple/parents pedigree chart shown in Fig. 1 – 1,021 kits and 1,435 matches. I note that boxes for couple/parents with only one child having descendants is shaded in yellow to denote that cannot be any MRCA tied to them. I also note that the number of kits and matches was blank for couple/parents whose surname was not searched as well as for duplicate or collapsed couple/parents. Finally, I note that if one were to search for the older ancestral surnames in the pedigree chart, then there are potentially thousands more kits and matches.

I now describe the methodology used to determine if a kit has a MRCA corresponding to couple/parents in the pedigree chart. Suppose I searched with my kit for the surname LIVERMORE in Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA. This brought up a list with 38 kits. I skipped over the first five kits as they corresponded to people I recognized and then right clicked on the picture of the sixth kit, choosing to open the link in a new window (refer to Fig. 2). Seeing that AncestryDNA had not found any Common Ancestors, I clicked on the “8,365 People” link to open up the family tree associated with the kit (refer to Fig. 3). Under the “Tree Search” pull down menu, I selected the “List of all people” option and then searched for the Last Name of “Livermore” (refer to Fig. 4). In searching this list, I recognize “Livermore, Samuel” as being Samuel² LIVERMORE Sr. who married Hannah BRIDGE in Chart 8 of Fig. 1. I clicked on this link to open up the “Facts” on the Samuel Livermore in the family tree linked to the kit (refer to Fig. 5). I saw that indeed this was Samuel² LIVERMORE Sr. and thus I had identified a potential MRCA.

The next step was to verify that this Samuel Livermore connected to the root person of the family tree, as sometimes there is no connection. Under the “Tools” pull-down menu, I selected the “View in Tree” option (refer to Fig. 6.) and obtained the family tree in Fig. 7. Now I began searching back through the tree until I can reached the root person of the linked family tree, as this is the presumed owner of the kit. After some searching, I was able to track back to the root of the tree (refer to Fig. 8). At this point, I now had a potential MRCA who was an ancestor of the root person of the tree.

Next, I assessed the accuracy of this family tree. I moved to FamilySearch’s Family Tree and looked up Samuel² LIVERMORE Sr. [LJLF-ZF2]. I then began tracing back his descendants, following the family tree associated with the kit (refer to Fig. 8). Tracing back 5 generations I arrived at Thaddeus Bemis ANDREWS [KVV8-FQZ] (1818-1868) and then generated a Fan Chart (refer to Fig. 9). I stopped here because in the outer row of the Fan Chart, five people to the right of Joseph BEMIS Sr. (top center) was John LIVERMORE and to the right of him was his spouse Grace SHERMAN. This is the John¹ LIVERMORE found in Chart 8 of Fig. 1 and is

the immigrant LIVERMORE ancestor. In summary, at this point I had connected the immigrant LIVERMORE ancestor to Thaddeus Bemis ANDREWS and thus had proven the accuracy of the family of the tree down to Thaddeus Bemis ANDREWS.

Now I followed descendants of Thaddeus Bemis ANDREWS as far as possible in FamilySearch until I stopped at Norman Evans KENDALL [L82Q-8R2], the father of the root person (refer to Fig. 10). In general, this process stops several generations short of the root person of the family tree. In such cases I would carefully examined the remaining ancestor for accuracy to within two generations of the root of the family tree supplied with the kit – I figure under normal circumstances that one should know the names of their parents and grandparents. If I can get to this point, then I have verified the accuracy of the family tree of the kit's owner and thus have determined the MRCA. In this case, the MRCA couple was Samuel² LIVERMORE Sr. and Hannah BRIDGE.

In the database I used to capture information about kits and matches, I entered the name of the kit, the length of the common DNA in cM and number of segments I had found for each member of the Group (refer to Table 1 of the original paper). I note that I recorded the kit under the descendant child of the MRCA ancestor. In this case, the information was stored under Anna³ Samuel² John¹ LIVERMORE who married John BEMIS with Samuel² LIVERMORE Sr. and Hannah BRIDGE being the MRCA couple/parents. Then I documented the family tree information by storing the family tree from the kit as seen in Fig. 8 along with the FamilySearch fan chart as seen in Fig. 9 into a PDF file labeled with the name of the kit. If I used additional information to verify the family tree, I would append that information to the end of this PDF file. For example, in the case of a ThruLines™ generated MRCA, I would also include the structure of the relationship to this person (refer to Fig. 11) at the end of the PDF file. This completes the documentation process.

Now I want to revisit the details of the proof itself. First, one needs substantial evidence relating Luther W DUNHAM to Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK, the root couple/parents of the pedigree chart. This means that one must find hundreds of kits and matches where the MRCA between the owner of a kit and a member of the group is in the pedigree chart. This will convince us that the kits and matches we found were not due to random DNA events. With 1,021 kits and 1,435 matches determined by common, shared DNA from descendants of Luther W. DUNHAM, there should be no doubt that Luther W DUNHAM is biologically related to the Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK couple.

Next, we need to establish that the root couple/parents are direct ancestors of Luther. For the couple Joseph⁵ DUNHAM Sr. and Sarah⁴ DAVIS there are 492 kits and 656 matches. This implies that Luther is biologically related to Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. as an individual as he is a son of Joseph⁵ DUNHAM Sr. and Sarah⁴ DAVIS. In a similar manner, the couple Dr. Joseph⁶ HITCHCOCK Jr. and Hannah⁵ LIVERMORE has 525 kits and 770 matches, which implies that Luther is biologically related to Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK as an individual.

We can carry this analysis back another generation. For the couple Micajah⁴ DUNHAM and Mary³ DAVIS there are 419 kits and 559 matches, which implies that Luther is biologically related Joseph⁵ DUNHAM Sr. as an individual. The couple Benjamin³ DAVIS and Mary³ LAZELL has 68 kits and 89 matches, which implies that Luther is biologically related to Sarah⁴

DAVIS as an individual. For the couple Deacon Joseph⁵ HITCHCOCK Sr. and Abigail³ KING has 283 kits and 409 matches, which implies that Luther is biologically related to Dr. Joseph⁶ HITCHCOCK Jr. as an individual. Finally, the couple Edmund⁴ LIVERMORE and Rebecca⁵ BENJAMIN has 236 kits and 355 matches, which implies that Luther is biologically related to Hannah⁵ LIVERMORE as an individual.

As we continue this analysis through the pedigree chart, we conclude that Luther W DUNHAM is biologically related to the individuals in of the couple/parents in the pedigree chart for Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK (the ones for which we collected autosomal DNA evidence). Technically this assertion is not quite true for the terminal couple/parents in this pedigree chart but this is a minor issue. The implication is that we need to carefully examine the couple/parents pedigree chart for at least the first three generations after the root couple/parents of the chart. Viewing Chart 1 of Fig. 1, we need to address four of the couple/parents. For couple 6, Deacon Joseph⁵ HITCHCOCK Sr. and Abigail³ KING, Abigail died shortly after the birth of Dr. Joseph⁶ HITCHCOCK Jr. and so there we expect to find no kits or matches. Couple 10, Samuel² DAVIS and Thankful² CLESSON is a duplicate of couple 9. Couple 11, Stephen² LAZELL and Sarah have no known other children with descendants and the same is true for couple 14, Lt. Samuel³ LIVERMORE Jr. and Elizabeth PARKER. All the remaining couple/parents in Chart 1 show kits and matches and this continues into their ancestors until reaching the immigrant or oldest known ancestor searched.

Now in a straightforward manner, we translate this couple/parents pedigree chart into a standard pedigree chart for Luther with him at the root and the root couple/parents located somewhere in this standard pedigree chart. Thus, Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK are proven to be direct ancestors of Luther W DUNHAM.

The final issue to resolve is the position of the root couple/parents in Luther's standard pedigree chart. FamilySearch Family Tree shows Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. [2W7Z-F8M] and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK [2W7J-CYQ] having two children not counting Luther – Seth DUNHAM [2W7J-Z3Q] born August 16, 1794, in Brimfield and Joseph DUNHAM III [2W7J-Z4J] born January 28, 1806, in Brimfield. Since Luther W. DUNHAM was born October 21, 1804, we conclude that the only viable relationship is that Joseph⁶ DUNHAM Jr. and Rebecca⁶ HITCHCOCK are Luther W. DUNHAM's parents and that Luther was born in Brimfield, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA.

Table 1. Focused Searches

Surname	Location
BENJAMIN	Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA
CLESSON	Massachusetts, USA
DAVIS	Brookfield, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA
DAVIS	Northampton, Hampshire, Massachusetts, USA
DUNHAM	Brimfield, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA
DUNHAM	Plymouth, Plymouth, Massachusetts, USA
HITCHCOCK	Brimfield, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA
HITCHCOCK	Springfield, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA
KING (Biological RICE)	Brimfield, Hampden, Massachusetts, USA
KING (Biological RICE)	Sudbury, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA
KING (Biological RICE)	Worcester, Worcester, Massachusetts, USA
LAZELL (Include Variants)	Plymouth County, Massachusetts, USA
LIVERMORE	Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA

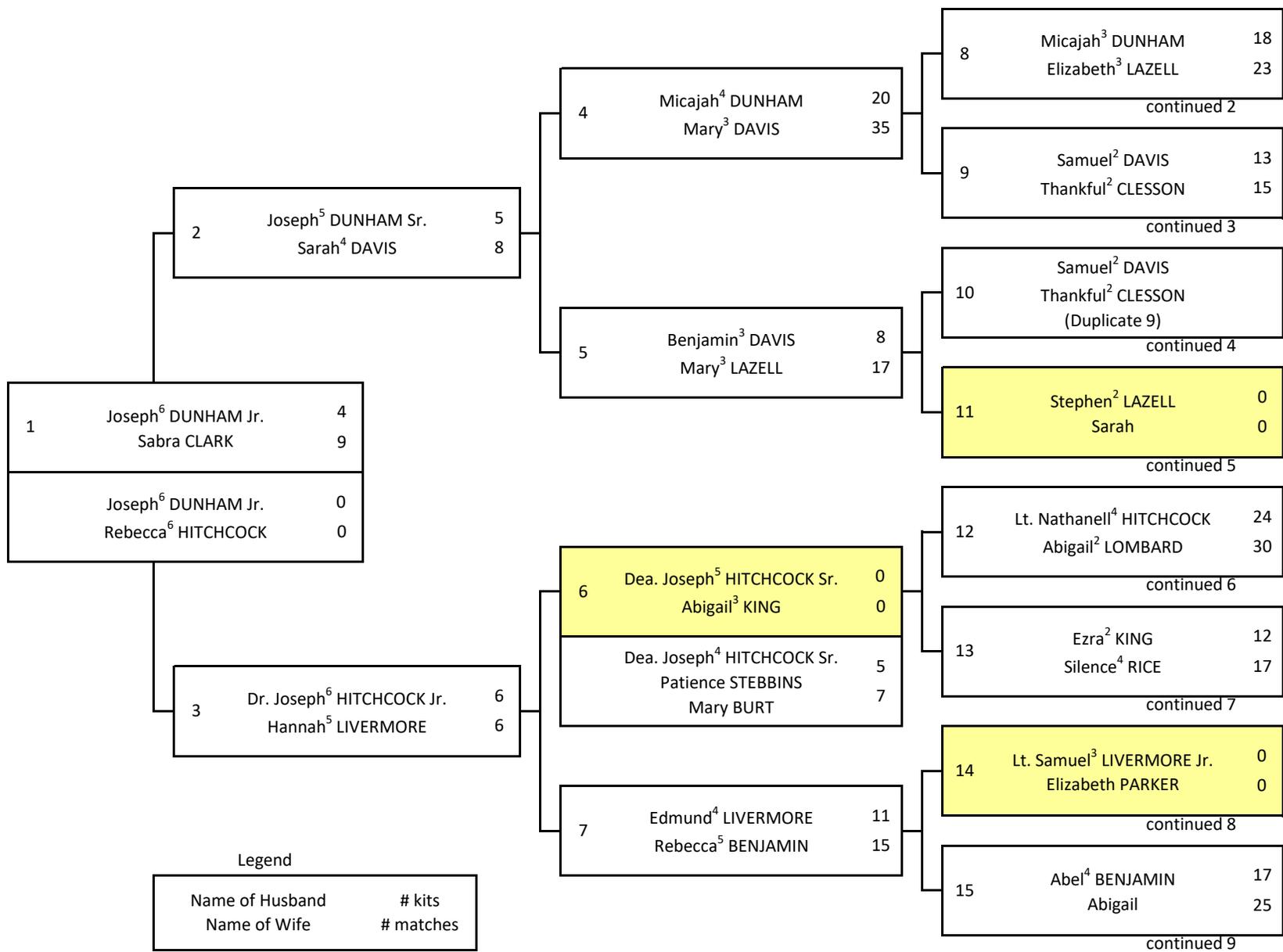


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 1

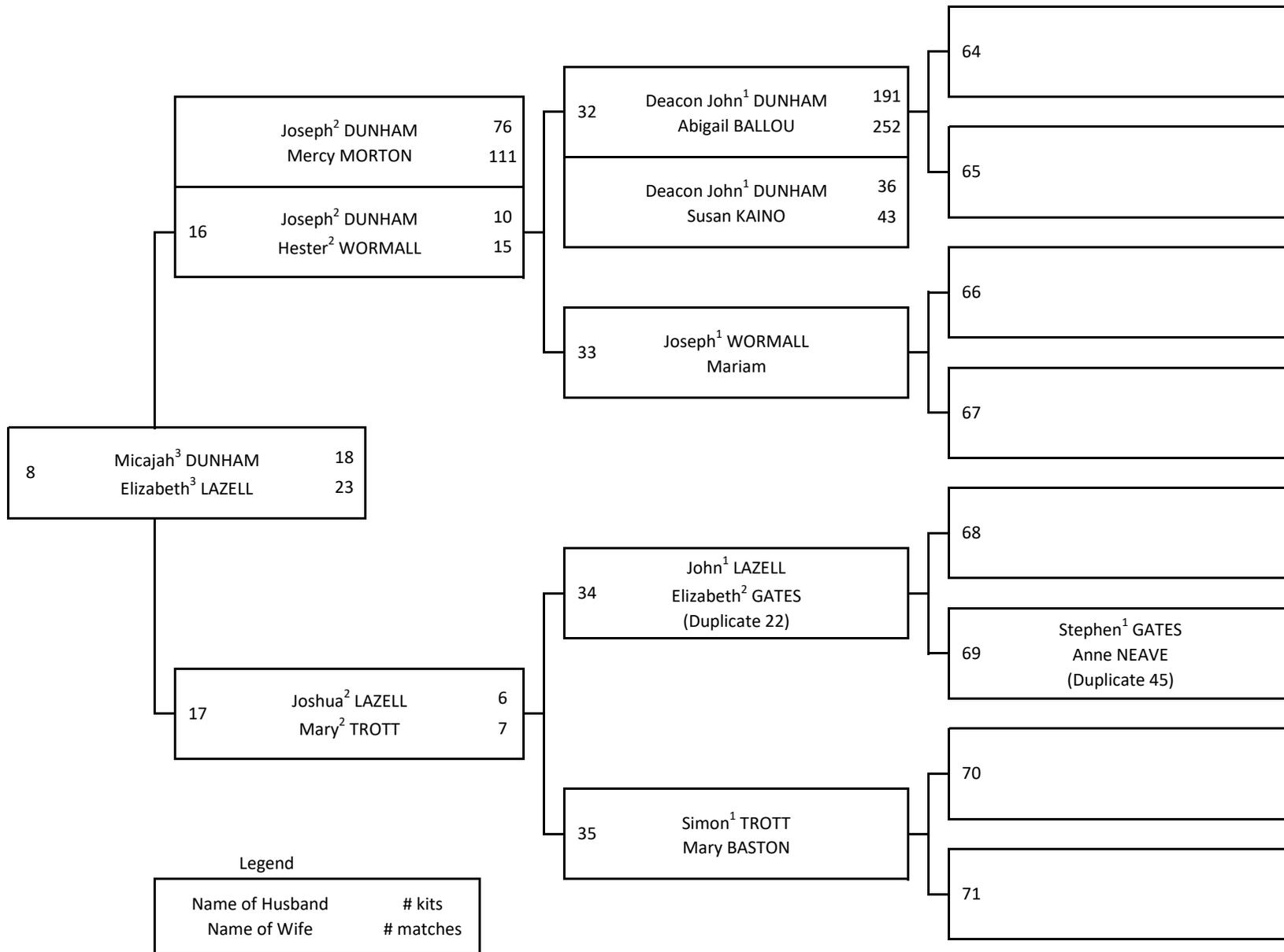


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 2

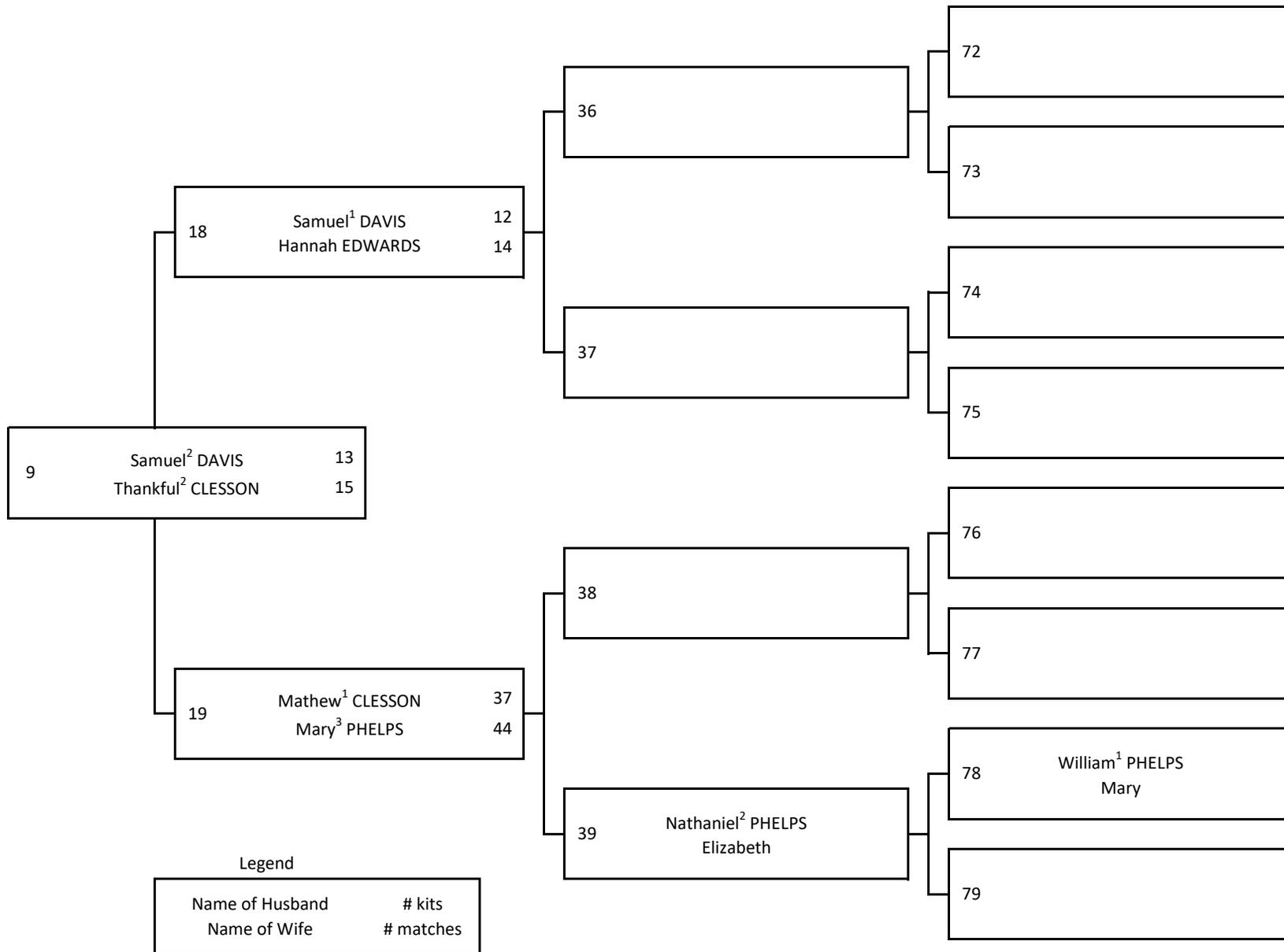


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 3

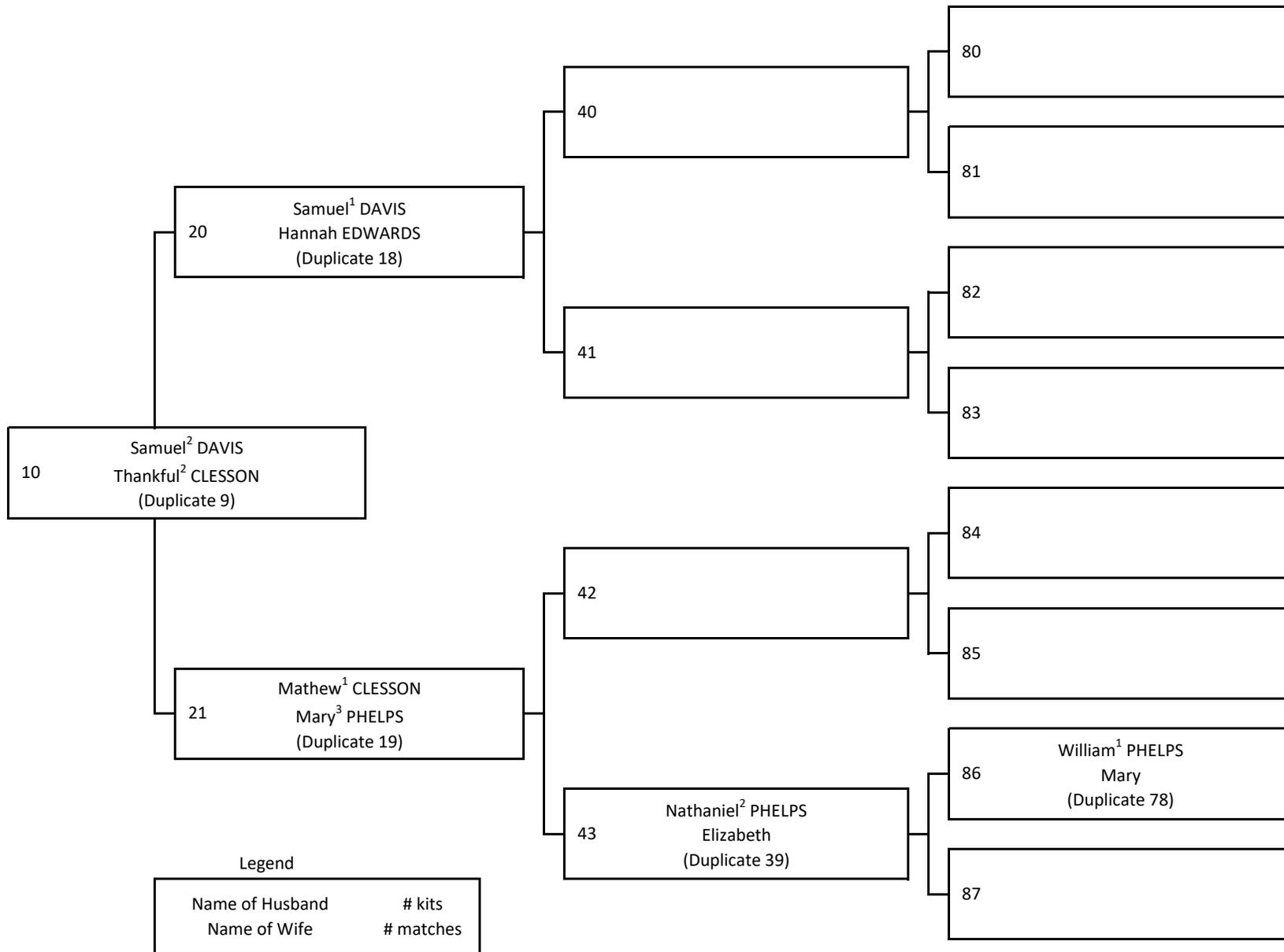


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 4

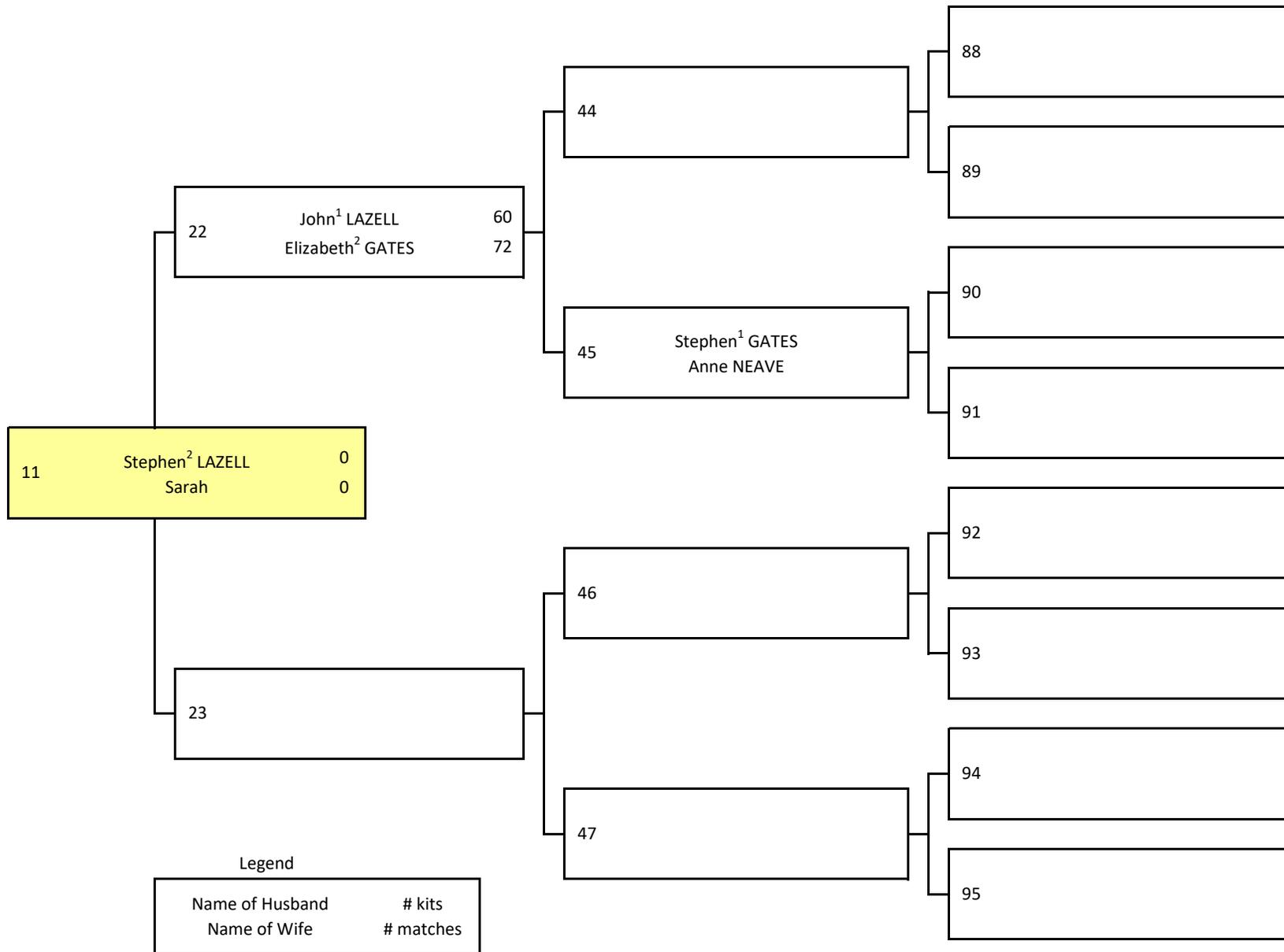


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 5

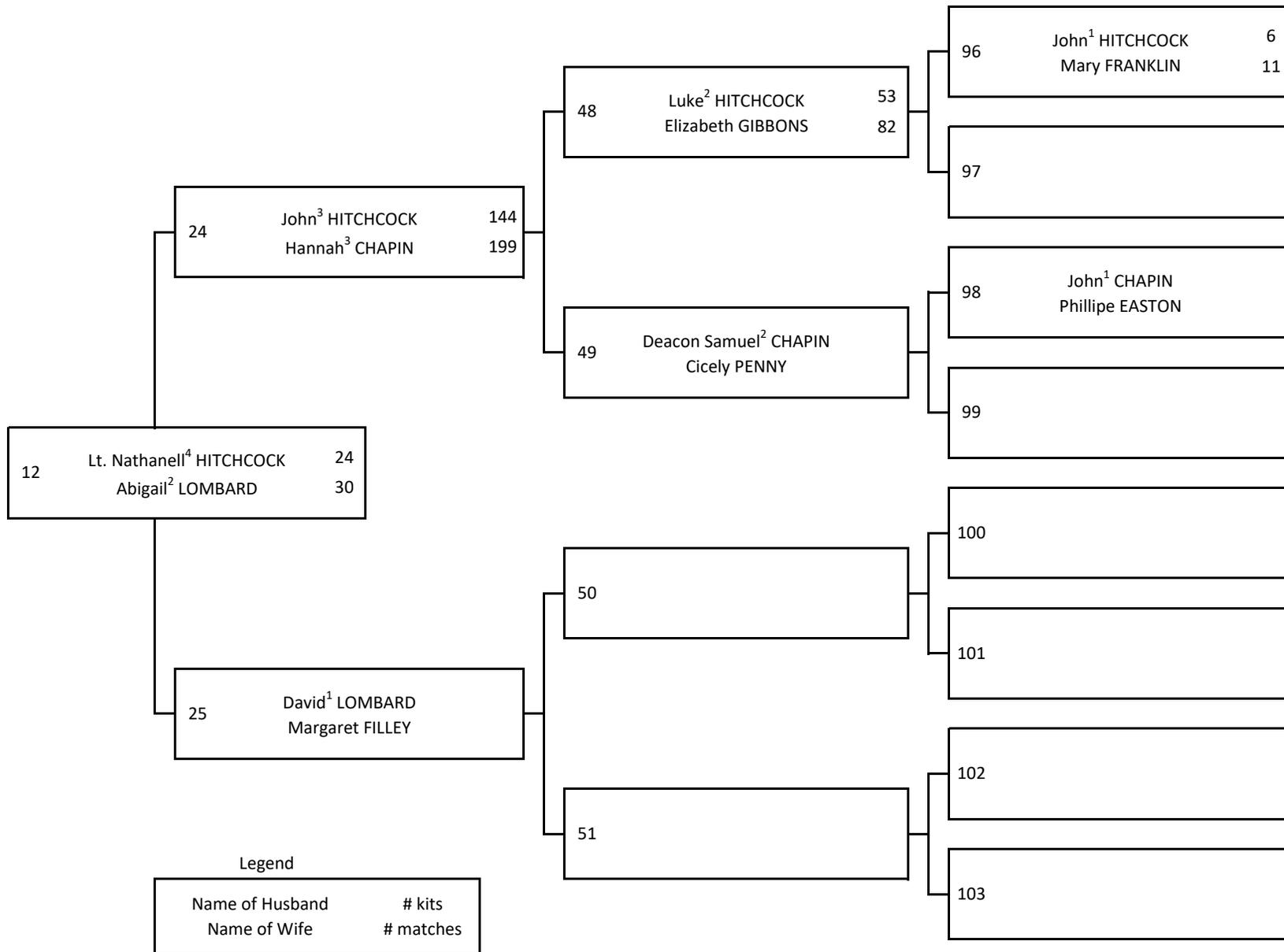


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 6

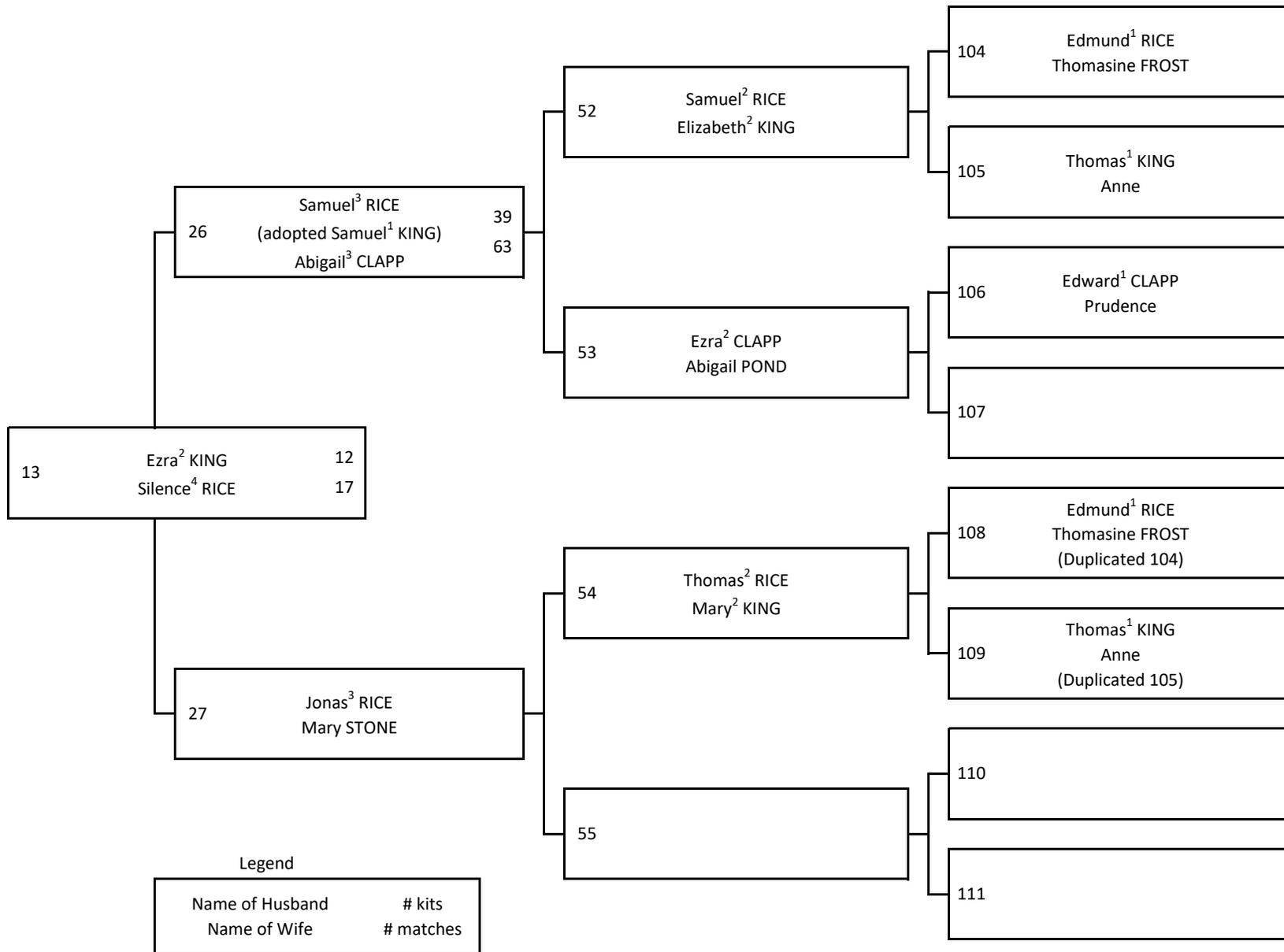


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 7

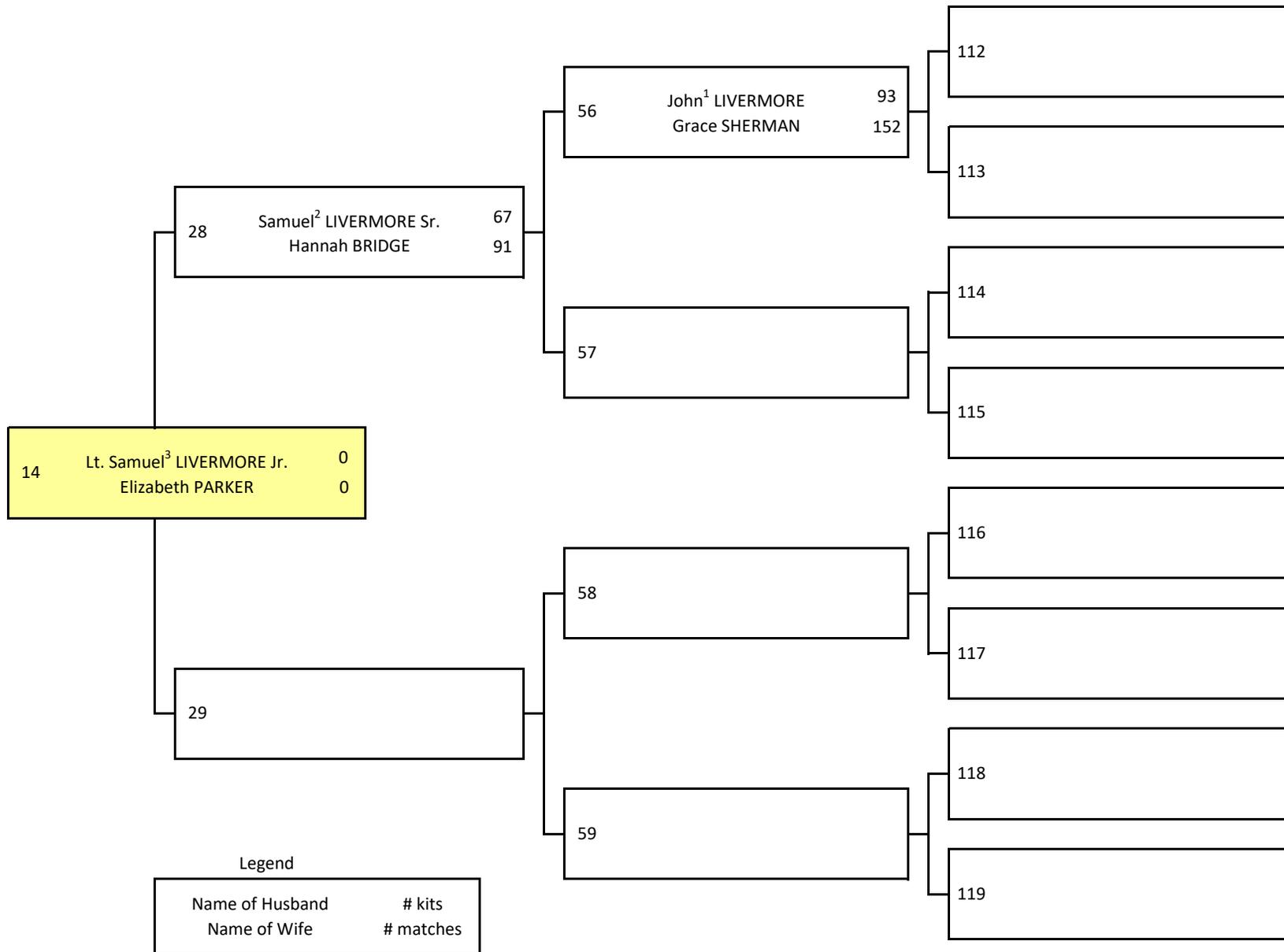


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 8

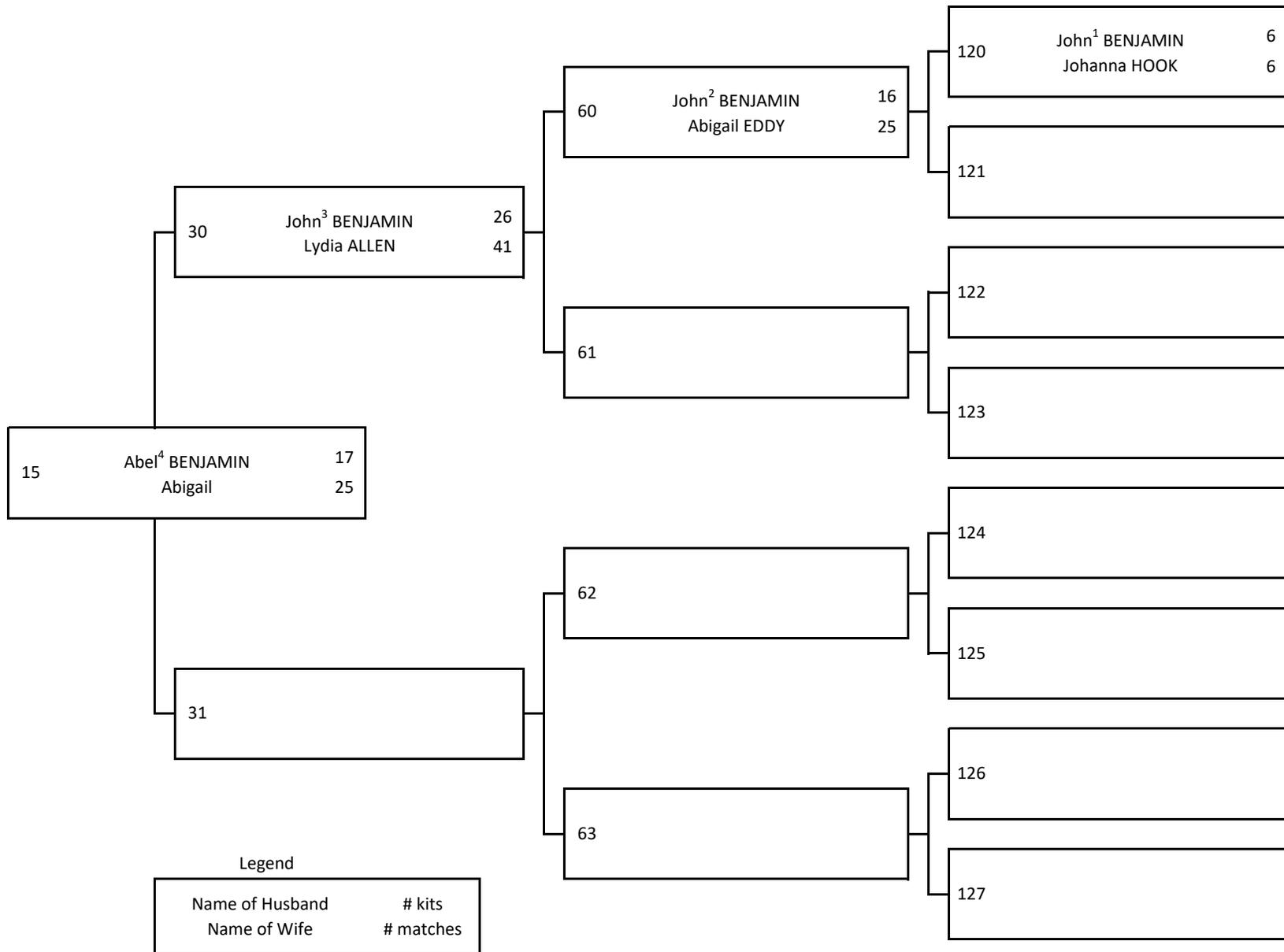


Figure 1. DNA Couple/Parents Pedigree Chart 9



You and [Redacted]

Predicted relationship: 4th-6th Cousin

Shared DNA: 23 cM across 2 segments

Message

Add/edit groups
LIVERMORE

Trees Ethnicity Shared Matches

How are you and [Redacted] related?

Common Ancestors

We can't find any common ancestors for you and [Redacted]. This can happen if your Ancestry family trees aren't linked to your DNA results, or if you don't have the same people in your trees. If we find any common ancestors for you and [Redacted], you'll be able to see them here.

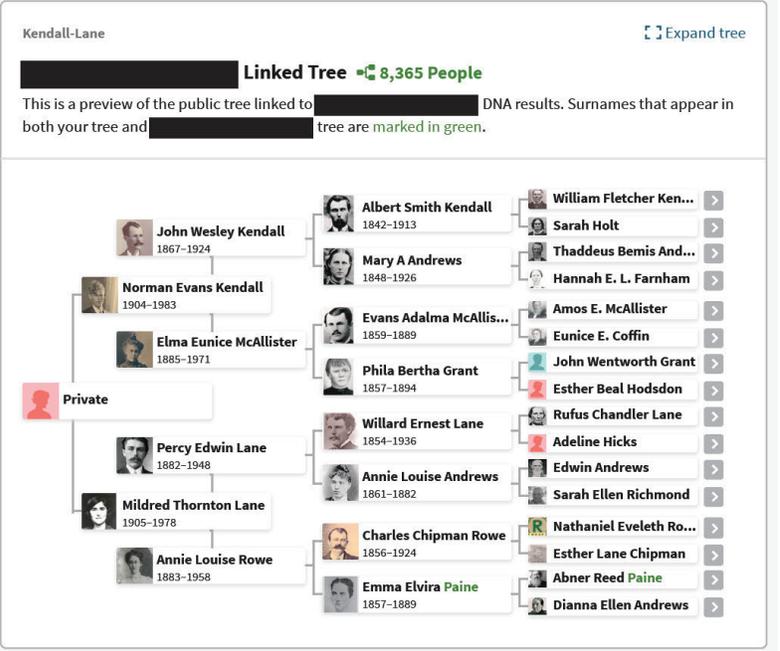


Figure 2: AncestryDNA - You and AncestryDNA Kit

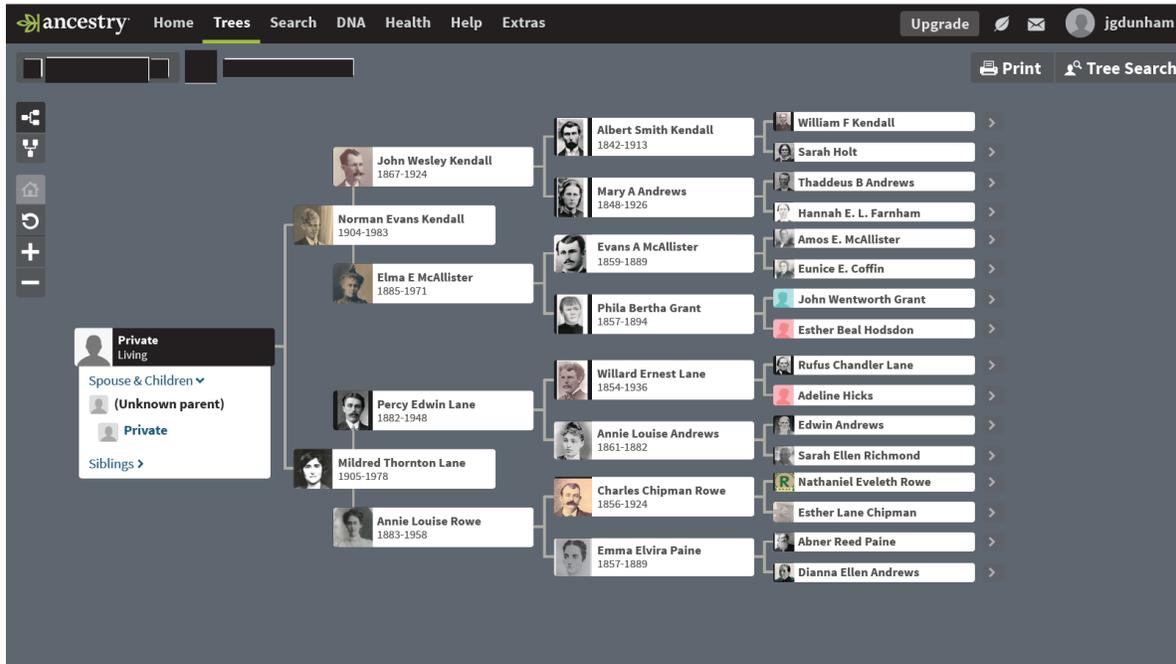


Figure 3: AncestryDNA - Family Tree for AncestryDNA Kit

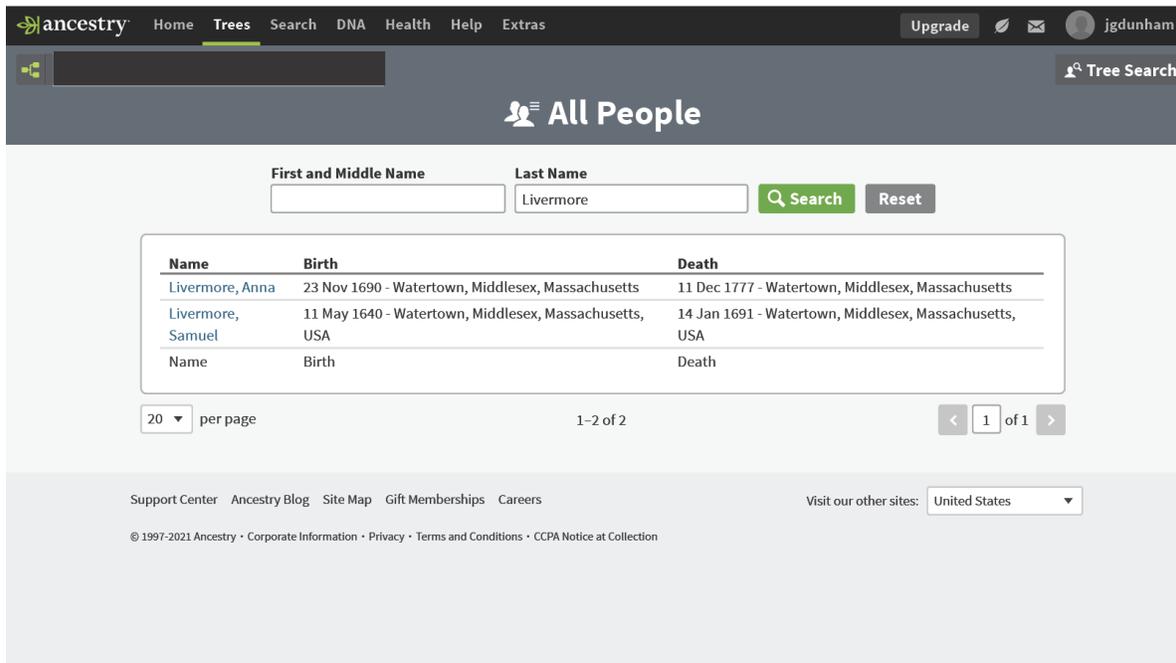


Figure 4: AncestryDNA - List of LIVERMOREs for AncestryDNA Kit

ancestry Home Trees Search DNA Health Help Extras Upgrade jgdunham

Tree Search Search Tools



Samuel Livermore

BIRTH 11 MAY 1640 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA
DEATH 14 JAN 1691 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA

LifeStory **Facts** Gallery

Facts

Filter

Name
Samuel Livermore

Gender
Male

1640 (AGE)
Birth
11 May 1640 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA

1690 50
Birth of Daughter Anna Livermore (1690-1777)
23 Nov 1690 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts

1691 50
Death
14 Jan 1691 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA

Sources

No sources

Search on Ancestry

Family

Parents

Unknown Father

Unknown Mother

Spouse & Children

Anna Bridge 1646-1727

Anna Livermore 1690-1777

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Figure 5: AncestryDNA - Samuel LIVERMORE Facts for AncestryDNA Kit

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Tree Search Search Tools

 **Samuel Livermore**
 BIRTH 11 MAY 1640 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA
 DEATH 14 JAN 1691 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA

View in Tree
 View Comments
 Save to Tree
 Print-friendly
 Member Connect

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Facts Filter

Name
Samuel Livermore

Gender
Male

1640 (AGE)
Birth
11 May 1640 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA

1690 50
Birth of Daughter Anna Livermore (1690–1777)
23 Nov 1690 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts

1691 50
Death
14 Jan 1691 • Watertown, Middlesex, Massachusetts, USA

Sources
No sources
Search on Ancestry

Family

Parents

Unknown Father

Unknown Mother

Spouse & Children

Anna Bridge
1646–1727

Anna Livermore
1690–1777

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Figure 6: AncestryDNA - Samuel LIVERMORE Facts for AncestryDNA Kit with Menu



Figure 7: AncestryDNA - Samuel LIVERMORE Descendants for AncestryDNA Kit

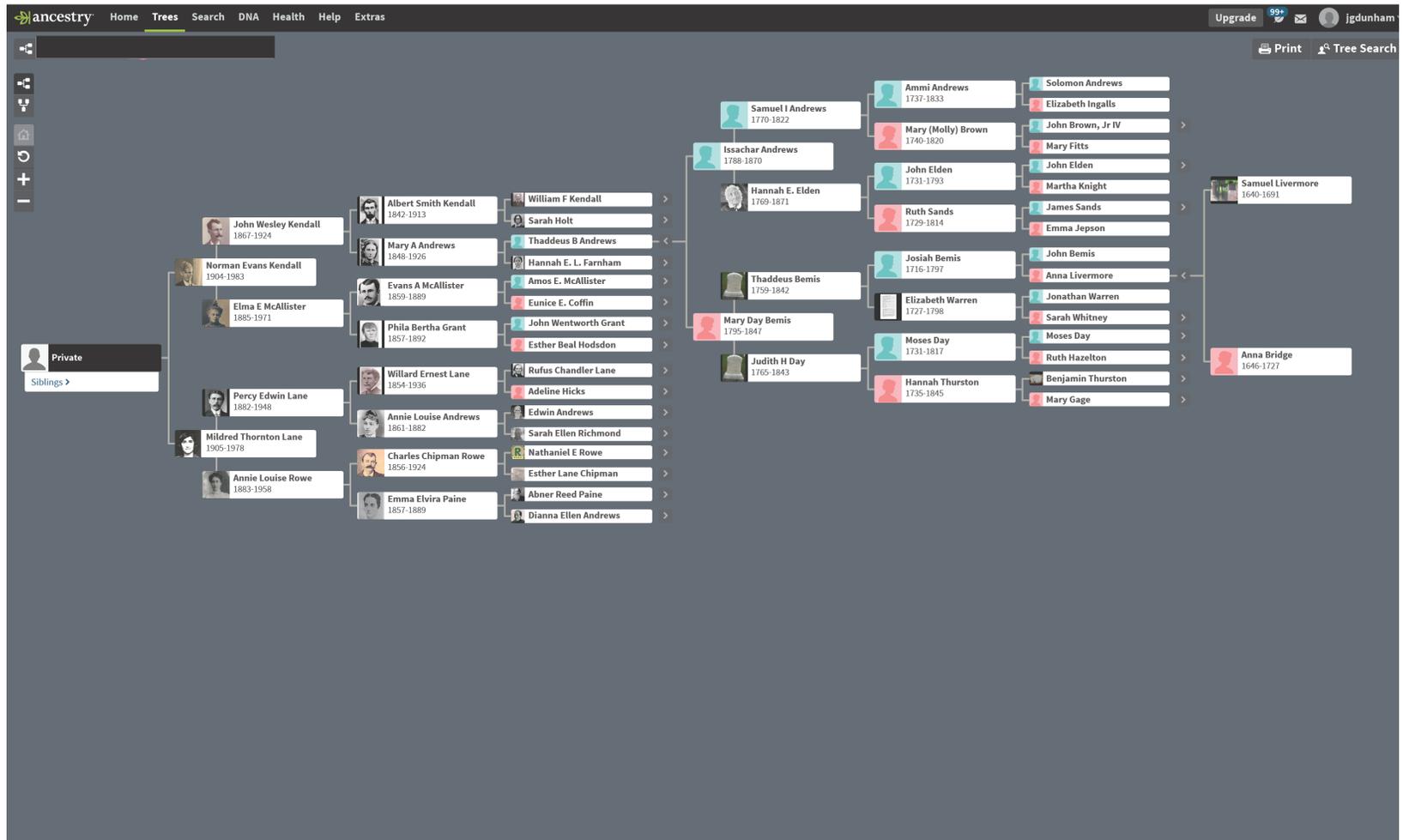


Figure 8: AncestryDNA - Family Tree to Samuel LIVERMORE for AncestryDNA Kit

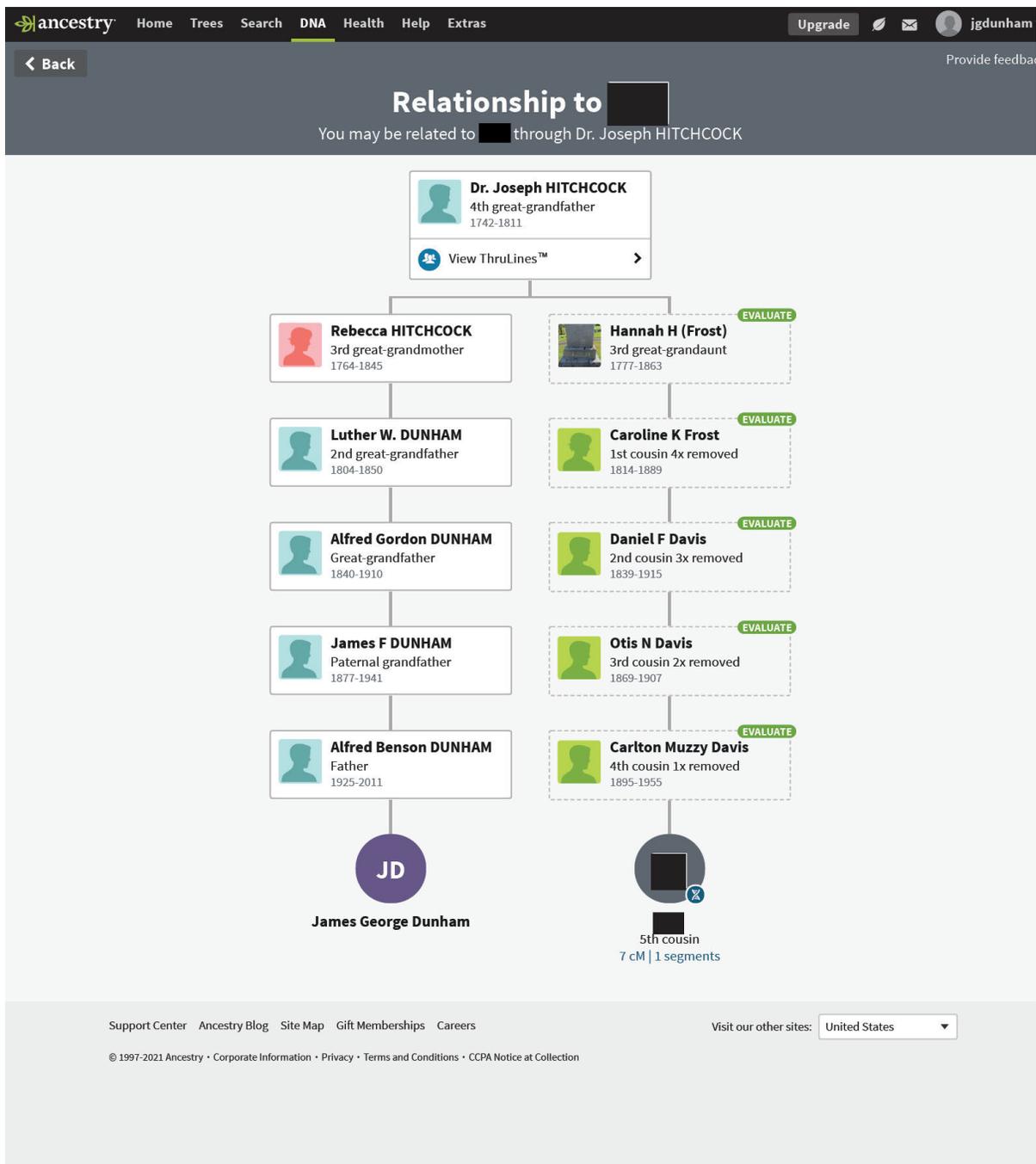


Figure 11: AncestryDNA - Relationship to AncestryDNA Kit